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Korea continues the fight to contain FMD and HPAI

Report Categories:

Livestock and Products

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Report Highlights:

The Korean government has expended considerable resources in an effort to contain Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD) in swine and cattle as well as High Pathogen Avian Influenza (HPAI) in poultry farms. Although vaccination efforts and culling of affected animals seems to have proven effective in controlling mass spreading of the diseases, it has not resulted in eradication. The following provides updates to reports KS1501 and KS1503.

General Information:

Status of FMD outbreak

Since the first outbreak of FMD on December 3, 2014, a total of 151 cases (147 cases in swine farms and 4 cases in cattle farms) have been confirmed positive as of March 17, 2015. To date, a total of 139,061 head (including the culling of 4,374 heads on 9 farms as a preventive measure) on 160 farms have been culled. FMD cases that were mostly found in certain areas (Hongsung and Chunahn areas, etc.) have recently spread to new areas (Kyungju, Ahsan, etc.). Also, the number of cases is increasing rather than dropping. A total of 26 cases were confirmed in December 2014. This increased to 45 cases in January, 48 cases in February and 32 cases as of March 17, 2015. The Korean government attributes the cause for such a rise in the number of cases to an increased number of reports filed and an increased number of tests as a result of enhanced quarantine measures. Recently implemented quarantine measures are; 1) NSP (Non-structural protein, a known antibody that has been infected with FMD) antibody test conducted on swine coming from areas with known FMD cases (enacted March 6, 2015), 2) enhanced clinical tests prior to shipping pigs to slaughter plants (enacted March 12), and 3) Virus (antigen) test of trucks transporting feed and livestock (enacted March 5). Due to such measures, the Korean government assumes that the farms which had not reported, or avoided reporting, suspected cases are being detected. The Korean government plans to encourage reporting of suspected cases through compensation to those who report such cases while provincial governments take legal action against farmers that intentionally avoid or delay reporting of suspected cases.

The Korean government also imported 800,000 doses of a new type of polyvalent vaccine that includes O 3039 (O1 manisa + O 3039) on March 16 and will distribute it to farms located in the areas where there have been FMD cases. Korea currently has 6.85 million doses of “O1 manisa +A+Asia 1” vaccine that it has been using since January 2012. In addition to this, the Korean government plans to import 2.4 million doses of polyvalent vaccine that includes O 3039 and distribute it the farms within the areas where there have been FMD cases. “O1 manisa +A+Asia 1” vaccine will continue to be supplied to swine farms located in areas where there have not been any FMD cases and also cattle farms. The Korean government plans to continue to secure more vaccine beyond March to avoid any shortage.

Status of HPAI

As of March 18, 2015, a total of 133 cases of HPAI have been detected and as a result, a total of 3.88 million heads from 163 farms have been culled. The last positive case of HPAI detected in wild birds was on January 27, 2015. However, as migrant birds continue to migrate up to April, the Korean government is expecting to see more spontaneous cases of HPAI until then. The Korean government will designate individuals as “honorary surveillance people” to check traditional markets where live chickens and ducks are sold in spring time. The government will also continue to monitor the situation.